



Photos by Airman 1st Class Craig Cisek

Warren's Security Forces Guardian Challenge team compete in the obstacle course during the 2004 Guardian Challenge held at Vandenberg Air Force Base, Calif.



**Airman 1st Class Lauren Sixbey**  
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Warren's finest troops are preparing to go head to head with others from Air Force Space Command for this year's Guardian Challenge competition to be held at Vandenberg Air Force Base May 2 through 6.

Representing Warren this year will be members from the 90th Operations Group, 90th Missile Maintenance Group, 90th Security Forces Group and 90th Communications Squadron.

Guardian Challenge is the only major competition that pits the best space command teams against each other. It is the only opportunity for those competing to demonstrate their abilities and effectiveness of their training during peacetime in a competitive environment.

Teams are chosen through rigorous written and several stages of a practical exam. Then the training begins; although some groups like security forces can't begin training until 30 days prior to the event. Training begins early March

with two phases. The first phase consists of studying procedures, AFIs and more. Phase two is hands on training. Maintenance, for example, will work on a task from a script developed by trainers.

With the deactivation of the Peacekeeper missile system scheduled for later this year there will be a special emphasis on the system.

A test and evaluation launch is scheduled to take place at Vandenberg at the same time as Guardian Challenge.

Warren will compete for the coveted Blanchard Trophy that is awarded to the best space ICBM wing team. Warren previously won the Blanchard in 1973, 1984, 1996 and 1997. The best space operations wing team is given the Aldridge Trophy and the best space launch wing team receives the Schriever Trophy.

Awards are also presented to the best missile operations crew, space operations crew and spacelift operations crew. Functional area awards are given to the best maintenance, security police, communications, missile code

controller, chef and helicopter elements.

"This year is our year to bring back the Blanchard Trophy," said Lt. Col. Jeff Smith, Guardian Challenge project manager.

Last year Warren took third place, behind Malmstrom Air Force Base, Mont., and the winner Minot AFB, N.D. Warren, however took home top honors for best chefs, best munitions maintenance and best pneudraulics missile maintenance team.

Guardian Challenge, originally named Olympic Arena, was created in 1967 to improve readiness and combat capabilities, create competition-tough personnel and enhance esprit de corps.

The event was renamed Guardian Challenge in 1993 when the space and missile career fields merged. Guardian Challenge reflects the "Guardians of the High Frontier" motto, according to the Guardian Challenge Web site.

This competition has been held nearly every year since 1967. In 2002 the challenge was canceled due to Operation Iraqi Freedom. It was canceled only one other time in 1968 due to the Vietnam War.



Above: Staff Sgt. David Sellers and Airman 1st Class Michael Woods, 90th Communications Squadron, assemble a hardened intersite cable systems spike during a missile maintenance team challenge.

Right: Staff Sgt. Scott Gero, 90th Security Forces Squadron, catches his breath after the obstacle course.

Far right: A helicopter from the 37th Helicopter Flight competes in the helicopter hover competition.



Airman 1st Class Holly Marquez, 321st Missile Squadron, prepares a salad during the Guardian Challenge chef's cooking competition May 4, 2004.

